LABOUR MONTHLY

EDITOR R. PALME DUTT

NOTES OF THE MONTH — R. P. D.

THE TURN IN THE WAR — William Rust

THE LABOUR CONFERENCE — J. R. Campbell

HOT SPRINGS — Giles Norfolk

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NEXT STEPS TO UNITY

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JULY 1943

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

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REDUCTION OF SUPPLIES

Owing to a recalculation of the quota and a consequent reallocation of supply of paper for LABOUR MONTHLY, the number of copies printed each month has to be still further reduced. This comes into operation with this month's issue of the magazine.

In order to make as many copies as possible out of the quota available (which is reckoned on the weight of paper consumed) it has been decided to make permanent the printing on the very light-weight blue paper with which an experiment was made last month.

In addition, it has been decided to reduce the weight of the cover paper from this month onwards.

These changes (however regrettable from the point of view of the appearance of the magazine) will yield a considerable extra number of copies.

Nevertheless, in spite of these measures, the cut in supplies will be severely felt and the Editorial Board has had to consider how to meet the problems created, both for readers and publishers—and for the maintenance of the magazine.

We suggest that wherever there is difficulty in any factory or trade union branch in securing customary supplies, steps should be taken locally to arrange with the nearest bookshop for reserving copies. Those regular readers who find it impossible by any other means to secure copies are recommended that their best course would be to apply to take out an individual postal subscription. For a limited period we shall hold open a number of such postal subscriptions, and for this purpose we append a form on page 3 of cover.

The distributing agencies who have to carry out the ungrateful task of rationing these restricted supplies to the districts of the country, will do so on the basis of previous consumption.

Labour Monthly Discussion Groups, already existing in some two hundred centres, can act as "Circulating Libraries" for Discussion Group members, so that a single copy can be read by half-a-dozen or more persons. This is an additional reason for the formation of Discussion Groups, originally started for exchange of views on the contents of the magazine.

Lastly, we have to call our readers' attention to the effect that this cut in circulation is bound to have upon the finances of the magazine unless the readers who have so generously given in the past come to our help in the coming months. Readers are asked to turn to page 3 of cover, where this side of the problem is gone into more fully.

These difficulties confronting LABOUR MONTHLY and its readers are inevitable in war-time, and the Editorial Board is confident that our readers will understand and respond.

LABOUR MONTHLY EDITORIAL BOARD.

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

Labour Party Conference and Communist Congress—What the People Are Looking For—Labour's Opportunity and Responsibility—Climax of the War—The Crucial Test—Firm Stand for National Unity—Positive Achievements—Divisions and Confusions—Affiliation Vote—The Crucial Weakness—Abdication of Labour's Role in National Unity—Silence on War Issues—To-day and To-morrow—Labour and India—Where the Conference Failed—A Soldier's Plea—The Lesson—Unreal Debating—Conclusions for the Future—An Urgent Campaign—Co-operation—Responsibility of the Communist Party Congress.

AGAINST the background of the present climax of the war and the impending military offensive the Labour Party Conference met at Whitsun. Within a fortnight the Communist Party Congress follows in the beginning of July. What leadership have these Conferences, representing the main active forces of the political labour movement, to offer the people in the present urgent situation? This is the stern question by which equally the Labour Party Conference and the Communist Party Congress will be judged, not only by the active workers, but by millions of men and women outside both parties.

WIDE sections of the people, as never before, are stirring to political life under the impact of the war against Fascism. A new generation has grown to adult years, which has had no experience of pre-war political forms, but is sharply aware of present political issues. These millions, alike in civilian life and in the armed forces, are moving away from old routine and traditions and envisaging new possibilities. In general, their present outlook moves to the left, to what in the broadest sense may be regarded as the cause of Labour and of Socialism. But they are at present little concerned with party alignments. There is a marked lack of confidence in the older party machines—a tendency which can have its obvious dangers, if exploited by adventurist elements, and if the established forms of the labour movement appear ossified or hopelessly divided. They stand undoubtedly for national unity behind the Government for victory over Fascism. But they demand at the same time an active and dynamic progressive leadership within the framework of national unity, capable of influencing the action of the Government.

GIVEN an enlightened and united leadership, labour now holds the most favourable opportunity for a generation. But it must be recognised at the same time that the existing labour movement is on trial in the eyes of wide sections of the people. The overcoming of all needless divisions and differences, the wiping out of petty sectional calculations, and the achievement of positive and inspiring leadership—these are the indispensable price, not only of victory, but of survival. Therefore the question must be posed in all seriousness, as underlying the issues of both these Conferences: how far is the labour movement rising to the height of its present opportunities and responsibilities?

EVEN more important than these current trends of mass feeling, which it is the task of Labour to interpret and to lead, is the crucial war situation in which the Labour Party Conference met and in which the Communist Party Congress will be meeting. A Conference in the midst of battle cannot be judged by peace-time standards. These Conferences cannot be surveyed for one moment in isolation from the sharp problems of the existing stage of the war. The apparent temporary "lull" in the war might make the war seem far away to a few of the un-

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thinking, leaving them free to indulge in peacetime electoral calculations or future speculations; but the responsible leadership of Labour can least of all afford any illusions or self-deceptions in this life-and-death struggle against Fascism.

THE present "lull" in the war (which may be broken before these lines appear) is deceptive. The Government has spoken of the large-scale military operations of an offensive character impending in Europe. The Washington decisions, both strategic and diplomatic, have still to unfold themselves. The issue of the war is by no means yet decided. As Mr. Attlee justly stressed to the Conference on the first day:—

> We should not be misled into thinking that the war is won. . . The chances of war are incalculable. . . . Unity is still vitally important.

It might have been well if this keynote of the first day of the Conference had been remembered on the third day.

IT is true that the strength and superiority of the United Nations are every day more powerfully demonstrated. But in corresponding degree the desperate counter-measures of Fascism, not only military, but also political and diplomatic, are intensified to avert defeat, prolong the war or secure a compromise settlement. Thus, in proportion as the prospects of victory draws closer, so gigantic issues of war and of peace confront the people, which will require all their unity and strength, alike in action and in the political field, to solve successfully in the interests of democratic anti-Fascist victory.

IMMEDIATE problems of the war—not merely for the experts, but for broad democratic opinion, requiring the mobilisation of the democratic forces in opposition to the mobilisation of the pro-Fascists and isolationists—problems of diplomatic and military strategy, of the relation of the war in the Far East and in Europe, of air bombing and the Second Front, of policy in India, of war production and organisation, of home political alignments and home social and economic questions, no less than post-war questions, imperatively demand a clear and united voice and leadership of the progressive forces within the common national effort. Has this leadership been given? The test by which these Conferences of the political labour movement will be judged is the extent to which they are able to give service and practical leadership on these present issues before the people, and thus to mobilise the labour and democratic movement for a positive role in the war, for anti-Fascist victory and for the further advance which can only be achieved on the foundations of such victory and of such a positive role during the war.

JUDGED by this test, how does the outcome of the Labour Party Conference stand? The outcome of the Labour Party Conference revealed that contradiction which lies at the root of the present dilemmas of the movement. On the one hand, the Conference firmly and emphatically and by an overwhelming majority declared—and this was the outstanding positive achievement of the Conference—for the maintenance of national unity against Fascism, and rejected the proposals to break the electoral truce, which would have meant in fact to break the coalition against Fascism. On the other hand, having on the first day declared for national unity, for co-operation with Tories and Liberals against Fascism, the Conference, by a less decisive majority, on the third day rejected working-class unity, for co-operation with Communists within that national unity, although the absence of such working-class unity within the national front inevitably gives the initiative and decisive role to the non-Labour elements—and thus gives rise to the tendencies of left impatience and demands for the breaking of the electoral

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truce. Similarly, the Conference made clear that the electoral truce did not mean a political truce, that is, the abandonment of the most active current political campaigning of the labour movement in the present situation. But while an abstract position was thus laid down, no leadership for such a campaign on immediate present issues was given; on the contrary, on many vital immediate issues a spectacle was revealed of indecision, division of leadership, or evasion of responsibility.

THE positive aspects of the Conference must not be underestimated. The six-to-one majority for the electoral truce corrected the confusion of last year's narrow majority, and dealt a powerful blow against all the undermining disruptive manoeuvres to break national unity, as well as considerably surprising the ill-informed press speculations which to the last had anticipated a close vote. There is no question that the very considerable campaign of the Communist Party during these past twelve months to clarify opinion among the militant workers on this issue played an important part in the decisive character of the result. The weakness of the unstable leftist splinter elements, divorced from any basis in the mass membership of the Unions, was revealed. Indeed, it is noticeable that precisely on this issue—supposedly the most difficult, controversial and uncertain—on which Executive policy and the Communist Party campaign went hand in hand, the most overwhelming majority of the Conference was recorded, thus giving clear and unambiguous leadership for the movement and strengthening the prestige of Labour. Therein was shown the basis for future stable leadership on all issues in the labour movement.

FURTHER positive results were shown in the measure of clearing of the question of a general election, the repudiation of a coupon election, and the pledge of submission of any question of a future governmental participation to a conference decision. The defeat of Morrison for the Treasurership represented to a certain degree a check to attempts to build up a personal dictatorship within the party reminiscent of the position of MacDonald, and a rebuff to the tendencies of policy expressed in his recent speeches which recalled closely the old MacDonald line and had received warm approval in leading monopoly capitalist quarters. It would be, however, a mistake to exaggerate the political significance of the very varied factors involved in a vote on persons, or to be blind to the similar tendencies of policy at present current in some leading Trade Union quarters, or in the general line implicit in the post-war resolutions on economy and industry behind a general vague phrasing. All these, however, are not yet immediate issues, although coming increasingly to the front in Labour and Trade Union policy and requiring further clearing. Important resolutions were passed on a number of special issues, such as service pay and pensions, a national health service, educational reform, support for the Beveridge Report, etc.

EVEN where there was a divided vote with a substantial minority, giving an effect of confusion and an indecisive result, the spirit of the votes showed the desire of the delegates for a clear, positive policy, and the cause of the confusion lay, not so much with the delegates, as with the lack of leadership and absence of any attempt to formulate an adequate line which could have commanded general support. Thus the division rejecting the anti-Government Silverman amendment on the Beveridge Report by 1,715,000 to 959,000 votes reflected the simultaneous strong desire to press the Government for the full adoption of the Beveridge Report and the equally definite determination not to allow this issue to be made a pretext for opposition to the Government or repudiation of the Labour Ministers.

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SIMILARLY, the adoption of the Iron and Steel Trades semi-Vansittart amendment to the Stokes semi-pacifist resolution on post-war policy in relation to Germany by 1,803,000 to 720,000 votes did not, in fact, represent the adoption of a Vansittart programme by the Labour Party, but reflected the definite rejection of any attempt to smuggle in pacifist tendencies under the guise of anti-Vansittartism, while at the same time the Iron and Steel Trades amendment, because of its implicit Vansittartite tendencies, was incapable of commanding general assent. Here again the evasion of responsibility of the Executive, and absence of any attempt to formulate an adequate and coherent policy, left the delegates with no other choice, and led to the sorry public picture of the Conference outcome, with the effect of extreme division on basic policy and the final adoption of an inadequate policy statement with no trace of working-class international outlook. The weakness lay with the leadership rather than with the spirit and outlook of the delegates.

FURTHER, while the cause of labour unity did not yet win the day at this Labour Party Conference—and the seriousness of this rejection in the present urgent situation is evident—the fact remains that the measure of support won, representing 26 per cent. of the Labour Party for Communist affiliation, is an important indication of the advance of the progressive forces, and the highest vote polled for affiliation since the original raising of the issue twenty-three years ago. The significance of this vote is the greater, since it included such Unions as the miners and the engineers, representing, with the railwaymen, the decisive forces of the organised working-class; of the railwaymen, the loco men voted for, while the vote of the quarter million of the N.U.R., cast against on the basis of a very narrow division, might very possibly have been in favour had their delegate meeting been held before the Conference in place of after, since District Councils representing the majority of the branches are reported to have declared in favour. The significance of this growing block of the key forces of the working class in favour of unity and Communist affiliation, and its unmistakable pointer to the future line of development of the working-class movement, is clearly understood by the Executive, and underlay their frantically repeated appeals for the dissolution of the Communist Party.

UNDER ordinary conditions the undoubted advance of the progressive forces within the Labour Party, even though not yet reaching a majority, could be regarded as a favourable outcome and a step forward in the inevitably slow and toilsome evolution of the movement. But these are not ordinary times. In the face of the urgent demands of the present situation, testing the very existence and future of the labour movement, the negative aspects of the outcome of the Labour Party Conference cannot be ignored. The main weakness of the Conference lay in its failure of leadership on the present issues of the war.

THE formal correct decision was registered in support of victory over Fascism, and in support of national unity for victory. This much was a positive outcome and a contribution to victory. But it went no further. The formal correct decision was not followed up by a positive policy. The formal decision in support of victory over Fascism was not followed up by any concrete policy for victory. The formal decision in support of national unity was not followed up by any positive indication of the role of the labour movement within national unity. This was the gaping void in the leadership and outcome of the Conference. It was not incorrect to deal with the post-war issues which now require the attention of the movement. But it is obvious that the

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most elaborate treatment of post-war issues cannot be accepted as an alibi for silence and a vacuum on the burning present issues of the war and the political situation.

APART from the electoral truce, it is difficult to find a major present issue which was dealt with by the Conference (it is true that working-class unity was a second major issue of the present political situation, but the outcome on this was negative). The post-war questions were not only those which were embodied in the Executive resolutions and which were formally devoted to post-war reconstruction: these in practice aroused no very passionate interest or debate. But the keenly disputed question of the general election and a post-war coalition government was a post-war question. The keenly disputed question of Vansittartism and the post-war treatment of Germany was a post-war question. Food and agriculture were treated as a post-war question; no present issues were seen in relation to the war organisation of food production and distribution. The same with Health. The same with Housing. The question of the necessary present campaign for the Beveridge Report was lost in the confusion of the issue of support or criticism retrospectively for the Labour Ministers or the Parliamentary Labour Party.

ON the military questions of the war—silence. On the burning questions of diplomatic strategy and a democratic anti-Fascist policy—silence. On the activities of the pro-Fascists in Britain—silence. On war production—silence. On war finance and taxation—silence. Plenty of vague generalisations about the future post-war structure of industry and the relations of the State controls and industry. But on the urgent present questions of the State controls, the strengthening of their democratic character and efficiency, and the appointment of controllers from outside the interests concerned—silence. Reaction may raise a racket in Conservative Conferences or similar assemblies against Cripps taking over one or two factories or replacing inefficient managements. But from Labour's Conference comes no answering strong call to strengthen the hands of the Government. The coal crisis is in the forefront of public attention. It might have been thought that Labour would have its word to say. But again silence. In that Conference were present skilled workers from every war industry, technicians and scientists, familiar with every problem, who could have assisted to give their lead on the tasks of war mobilisation and their mandate to Labour's Ministers in the Government. But all this was ruled out for fear of raising complications.

ON India—worse than silence: the strangling of discussion, despite the twelve resolutions tabled by affiliated organisations, and the consequent breaking up of the Conference without a decision or declaration of policy. Here is a first-class issue of democratic war policy, involving the whole future of the war in the Far East, and the whole question of acceptance of the Atlantic Charter. Reaction is thrusting aside the alliance of four hundred millions. Urgent representations from China, the United States, Australia, are rebuffed. President Roosevelt's personal envoy is forbidden to meet India's leaders. The Indian political leaders are forbidden to meet to reach a settlement and unity. Sixty thousand are thrown into prisons, and thousands killed, wounded or flogged. A shameful White Paper is issued to slander the democratic anti-Fascist national movement of the Indian people. All this is done with the official condonation and approval of the Labour Party, as set out in the official declarations and pamphlet on India. Here was a sacred duty of the labour movement in conference to speak its mind, to thrash out the

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issue and reach its decision. The question was shelved.

IT is this failure of current leadership that produced the inevitable negative effect of the outcome of the Conference. Division of leadership above, silence on burning current issues, confusion of tendencies below in the local parties; continued dwindling of membership (in the past year a fall, not only of the individual membership by 7,839, but also now of the Trade Union membership by 24,519)—such becomes the picture, wholly out of relation to the real advancing strength, confidence and militant spirit of the organised working-class movement in the country.

TWO voices from the Forces may be noted for the public effect. A soldier writes to the *News-Chronicle*; his letter appears under the title "A Soldier on the Whitsun Conference." He writes of "the hidden electorate, the men and women under arms . . . the hidden electorate which does not speak, watches and thinks." He declares how the Whitsun Labour Party Conference has left with them a negative effect:—

> Labour must serve us with something better than squabbles, splits, indecision, negatives and stale personalities.

The other voice comes from within the Conference, from the speech of Lieutenant Peart on the electoral truce:—

> Our task is to defeat Fascism. I have no illusions about Churchill and the Conservatives: but we are at such a critical stage of the war, when we will probably witness a great allied offensive opening to smash Fascism; so let us now preserve our unity. I want a more vigorous prosecution of the war by more vigorous Socialists in the Government. An electoral truce doesn't necessarily mean a political truce. Let us show that Labour can rule. Let us show that Labour can make a valuable contribution to the war effort.

The labour movement will do well to take serious note of the spirit which is indicated in these expressions.

IT is in the light of this actual situation revealed at the Conference that the question of working-class unity must now be seen, the reason why the Conference, despite a considerable minority vote, failed to respond to the call of unity, and the consequent next tasks in the advance to unity. The question of working-class unity cannot be separated from the general political life and activity of the movement. Because there was no burning consciousness of the war against Fascism or the urgent present tasks of the war against Fascism, but rather a tacit conspiracy to ignore it and to concentrate instead on the more congenial theme of post-war electoral calculations; because there was no sense of the positive role which the labour movement should be playing on present issues; therefore there was no feeling of the need to strengthen the movement; there was not even the slightest sign or hint of alarm at the fall of membership; there was no sense of the need of working-class unity.

HENCE the debate on unity, in respect of the opponents of affiliation, was most striking in its singular remoteness from any living issues before the people of this country. The speeches of 1922 could be repeated in 1943 with no sense of anachronism. The familiar real world and harsh contours of the common struggle we all have to face dissolved from view and gave place to a debater's happy hunting-ground of irrelevant quotations and unhistorical memories—very weak bullets with which to fight Fascism, but apparently very powerful arguments against unity of the anti-Fascist forces. The passionate pleas for unity against Fascism on Monday could be forgotten on Wednesday. The debate appeared to develop in a fantastically unreal world, removed from space or time, in which there was neither war, nor Fascism, nor any other reality confronting the working-class, but only an elysian picture of an uninterrupted electoral progress of the Labour Party, slightly inconvenienced by Red bogeys, to be kept at arm's length; in which the delegates who had just pledged

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themselves to slaughter Fascists in a colossal world holocaust shuddered at the thought of violence or bloodshed; in which Mr. Morrison could wax sarcastic at the idea of extra-constitutional methods being employed by reactionaries against the working class as some far-fetched hypothesis of the Communists—in the face of Fascism, in the face of Europe today, in the face of the destruction of half the working-class movements of the world. There was indeed not a single basic argument against unity employed which had not been employed by German Social Democracy before Hitler. The arguments were not in keeping with the issues of our time.

THE lesson is clear. The issue of working-class unity cannot be separated from the problem of the whole political life and activity of the movement. Here is the key problem of the present stage. The campaign for working-class unity goes forward, and must go forward, equally for affiliation as the best working solution within the forms and conditions of the movement of this country and for any and every form of co-operation, pending such a solution. Many Trade Union conferences, including those of some of the largest Unions, have still to reach their decision. But the campaign goes forward on a wider and extended plane.

THE central task is now to develop the widest political activity and campaigning of the entire labour movement on all the vital issues now before the people: the war and the mobilisation of the nation for democratic anti-Fascist aims; national unity and the popularisation of the decisions on the electoral truce, together with proposals for remedying the defects in its working; the unity of the United Nations; a settlement with India; war production; post-war aims; the winning of the Beveridge Report; service pay and pensions, as decided by the Conference; health, housing, food production, social and economic questions, combining Labour's post-war aims with present war needs. All these issues require the active campaigning of the labour movement. Here, through living political activity, away from the obsolete academic abstract arguments, can be learned the lesson of unity; the sense of common aims and common tasks, and of strength through common effort; the necessity for all forces to work together; the overcoming of old deep-rooted suspicions; the creation of the conditions and the possibility of co-operation. At the same time, in order to assist in removing the obstacles to co-operation, and as an immediate objective in the fight for unity, the issue of the withdrawal of the Black Circular now stands out with increased importance before the coming Trades Union Congress.

THE decisions of the Labour Party Conference provide an initial basis for such a campaign and revival of the activity of the labour movement. The emphatic decision for national unity for victory over Fascism, and for the consequent maintenance of the electoral truce, while delivering a rebuff to the suicidal breakaway hankerings and endeavours which were undermining the movement in many localities, was accompanied by the no less emphatic official declaration that the electoral truce did not mean a political truce or the abdication of independent political activity of the labour movement. This is the foundation stone, from which much more necessarily follows. It would have been better if the Labour Party Conference had filled in the outline of the general principle laid down with a more positive concrete leadership and call for the campaign on present issues. But what the Conference failed to accomplish must be made good, and can be made good, by the initiative of the entire movement.

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IT is here that the Congress of the Communist Party will be able to help. The Communist Party Congress represents no rival alternative to the Labour Party Conference, but a gathering of a section of the working-class movement, whose members have no aim other than to serve the interests of the whole movement. The Congress of the Communist Party, standing firmly for the unity of the whole labour movement, will strive to present its plain answer, as it sees the situation, to the issues before the working class and the people of this country today: to show the way forward for increased activity, for speediest victory over Fascism, and the next steps for the achievement of working-class unity and for the advance to the aims of the working class. The Communist Party Congress will be able to play, and will endeavour to play a constructive role in the present common problems of the labour movement.

R. P. D.

June 21, 1943

The Turn in the War

by WILLIAM RUST

BETWEEN the summers of 1942 and 1943 a great transformation has taken place in the course of the war, marked by a merging of the Allied blows against the enemy and the consequent crisis of the Nazi war machine. The initiative is passing into the hands of the Allies and the situation is increasingly favourable for joint offensive action from the East and the West on the continent of Europe. Catastrophe will overtake Hitler and Mussolini, providing the blows struck from the West are both timely and powerful.

At the time of writing there is still a lull in the land fighting, but for the Axis it is an ominous lull reflecting the loss of the strategical initiative. Italy's hour of decision is clearly approaching, and although Nazi plans with regard to the Eastern Front are deliberately befogged by confused and contradictory statements and forecasts of defensive warfare, it is unlikely that the summer will pass without the renewal of heavy fighting.

Following the conclusion of the Red Army's historic 1942-43 winter campaign, public attention naturally switched to North Africa and the Mediterranean. After Stalingrad, Tunisia. But an analysis of the military situation must still take the Eastern front as its starting-point, for it is there that the main forces of Germany are tied up, and it is there that the German Army has suffered its most shattering blows. Hitler is inextricably entangled on the Eastern Front, with the consequent crippling of his power to manoeuvre in the West.

Churchill took pains to underline this basic fact in his speech to the American Congress, and he repeated it in the second half of the report on the decisions of the Washington Conference which he presented to the House of Commons. Let us not forget, said Churchill, that the main burden of the war is still borne by our Russian Allies and that they are holding on their front no less than 218 Axis divisions. He also repeated the Casablanca declaration that it is necessary to do everything possible to take the weight off Russia in 1943.

Such statements, combined with forecasts of early blows against Hitler's so-called European fortress, are expressive of a marked strengthening of the military co-operation between the Allies and give grounds for confidence that a common strategical line leading to world victory is being worked out. They stand in sharp contrast to the period when the Government adhered to a policy of military passivity and when even Churchill publicly

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expressed his surprise that the Red Army had been able to halt the enemy.

Gone also are the days when weighty organs of the press, including the *Economist*, were gloomily foretelling the rolling up of the Red Army on the Eastern front and the possibility of the Nazis carrying through a gigantic pincer movement from the Nile on one side and the Caucasus on the other.

Little wonder that the Prime Minister, speaking with deep feeling about the meaning of the Russian effort and the debt that we owe to that great country, confidently foretold that the third and most desperate onslaught that Hitler is preparing against the Red Army will be in vain.

This is no time to direct attention to the mistakes and weaknesses of the past. History can deal with these in full measure. But as we are at last approaching Europe, even if by a roundabout route, it is not out of place to say a word or two in reply to those who, now basking in the sunshine of the Stalingrad and African victories, are anxious to condemn the great mass movement which welled up in Britain during 1942 for the opening of the Second Front on the continent of Europe.

"If the Government had succumbed to the agitation for a Second European Front," said Mr. Charles Dukes recently, "it is probable that the Nile would now have been in the hands of the enemy." To this statement the Labour Press Service, determined to be even more horrifying added:—

> To have met defeat in a precipitate, ill-prepared and under-sustained attempt at invasion would have seriously endangered the promising prospects of success which now encourage the United Nations.

The success of the African campaign in no way proves that the advocates of the invasion of Europe were wrong or impractical. Indeed, only people afflicted with very short memories can forget the debt we owe to Stalingrad and what might have been the fate of our African campaign if the Red Army, after holding the fort throughout the winter, had not succeeded in launching an offensive which destroyed the German forces at Stalingrad and drove them back across the Dnieper. Without the transference of thirty fresh divisions from the West the Germans would not have been able to retake Kharkov and thus save their front from being completely rolled up in the South.

If a Second Front in Europe in 1942 had drawn off sixty German divisions from the Eastern Front, it would have been impossible for the Nazis to have halted the winter advance of the Red Army. If the Nazis had been unable to transfer those thirty divisions last March the great military base of Kharkov would now be in the hands of the Red Army instead of the Germans.

Present successes should not blind us to past errors, neither should these successes be permitted to obscure the fact that the getting to grips with the German Army through the establishment of the Second Front on the continent of Europe is still the urgent task that confronts us. Speed in action is the primary condition of victory. We have no time to lose.

But there can be no question that the African campaign marks a decisive turning point in Anglo-American military experience, revealing the determination of both London and Washington resolutely to engage the enemy and demonstrating the might of their resources and the prowess of their commanders and troops. The last stages of the Tunisian fighting were an inspiring example of the greatly increased fighting power of the British and American forces and of how swiftly the Axis forces can be mowed down by an audacious command of planes and tanks in the hands of spirited troops. The days of "too little and too late" are over.

During May Churchill and Roosevelt, together with their staff officers and other advisers, consulted in Washington for fifteen days, reviewed the whole course of Anglo-American policy, strategy and eco-

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nomy, and reached decisions regarding the European theatre of war which led Churchill to foretell the approach of "amphibious operations, of peculiar complexity and hazard on a large scale." Shortly before these decisions had been reached Stalin, in his May 1 Order of the Day had declared that "Another two or three powerful blows from the West and from the East, like those dealt to the Hitlerite Army in the past five or six months, are needed for the catastrophe of Hitlerite Germany to become an accomplished fact."

Where will these blows be struck? Clearly, Italy is marked down for invasion; and there are other points of attack in the Balkans and the South of France which come within the scope of Mediterranean operations. Britain itself ought also to be the base of operations against occupied France and Norway.

The intention to strike is undoubted, but their speed, weight and extent is yet to be seen. This is the vital question. We repeat: speed, weight and extent. The blows must be strong enough to draw off a substantial number of divisions from the Eastern front.

The time lost in the opening round of the African campaign was partially regained in the final. If, as Churchill stated in his Commons speech, Hitler expected his Tunisian Army to hold out at least till August, the loss of these three months must have seriously disturbed Nazi strategy. The dilemma of the Nazis is obvious. Despite their boasted measures of "total mobilisation" they are confronted with the rapid gathering of the Allied invasion forces in the West before they are ready to launch their third main offensive in the East. To sit tight means to surrender the initiative, to attack the Red Army is to embark on a gamble which simultaneously weakens their power of resistance in the West.

Will the Allies be able to turn to good account the three months which they gained as a result of that final, smashing blow in Tunisia? It is, as yet, too early to pass judgment on the progress of the Mediterranean campaign. The smallest of the isolated islands (Pantellaria, Lampedusa, Linosa and Lampione) fell by mid-June chiefly as a result of aerial attack, and the offensive has now been switched to the much tougher nut of Sicily. The weight of the bombs dropped on these islands and on the ports and forts of Southern Italy is truly stupendous. As the resistance is inconsiderable, there is every reason to believe that the supremacy of the British and American air fleets will be quickly followed by sea and land actions with grievous results to Italy.

Italy can be knocked out of the war. This is now a practical military and political aim. During these last three years of war Italy has lost over 1,000,000 men, the flower of her armed forces, the greater part of her navy and merchant fleet, and a decisive part of her air force. Her territorial losses amount to 1,306,227 square miles.

Apart from the far-reaching moral and political effects of such a victory there would be results of great military significance. Using Italy as a base, it would be possible for the Allies greatly to extend the bombing of Germany's industrial centres, to strike across the Adriatic at the Axis-Quisling forces in Yugoslavia and to organise a drive into France, in short, to get closer to the direct struggle against the German army.

Allied air superiority is playing such a vital part in all current operations that attention is naturally concentrated on its enormous potentialities. The achievements of the air arm are so extensive that they interact with all phases of the armed struggle, although it is important to note that the lull in the land fighting gives a one-sided emphasis to the aerial offensive.

In his address to Congress Churchill wisely refused to commit himself to the view that the war could be won by bombing alone, a view sedulously advocated by those circles which are opposed to the Second Front and are not convinced of

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the decisive importance of the time factor in the conduct of the offensive. It is true that the air forces of Britain, America and the Soviet Union have an exceptionally important role to play in the coming battles and that the enormous striking power of the Anglo - American aerial forces is only now being demonstrated, but it would be a serious error to isolate the operation of one branch of the armed forces from the others.

The bombing of German industrial centres, ports, shipyards, submarine bases and building yards is seriously impeding Axis production and is undermining Axis morale. The air arm is also playing a conspicuous part in the fight against the U-boats. But Allied strategy does not, and cannot, consist of a long drawn out war of attrition; in order to achieve victory the Allies must secure land bases on the European continent, and they need these both in order to get to grips with the German army and to intensify the bombing of the enemy's decisive centres. Effective bombing is still largely limited to the Ruhr.

A Soviet view of this question is presented in a *Pravda* article by Major-General of Aviation Zhuravlev, who writes:—

> The successful conclusion of the North African campaign by our allies presented a vivid proof that aerial blows achieve their purpose best only when they are immediately taken advantage of by land troops and naval forces, *i.e.*, that the enemy can be finally destroyed if aerial operations are closely co-ordinated with operations of the army and navy. The aviation of our allies, their armies and navies, have acquired a wealth of experience in co-ordinated action, and we are firmly convinced that Africa was a training ground where the British and Americans learned to defeat the Germans.

The wide use of the air arm in protecting convoys and in attacking U-boats at sea has, in co-operation with other anti-submarine devices, helped to bring about a complete turn in the fight against this terrible menace. The declaration by the Germans of total submarine war has been successfully answered. And the measure of the success of this acute struggle is to be seen, not only in the high rate of U-boat sinkings and the consequent reduction in shipping losses, but also in the remarkable growth of shipbuilding. The proof is that May, 1943, was the best month of the war on all three sides of this front and that combined Anglo-American shipbuilding exceeded losses by more than three to one.

For our island nation this decisive turn in the fight against the threat of isolation and starvation is of profound significance, especially as the removal of the dead-weight—fear of insufficient shipping—which was holding back the unfolding of British strategy, will undoubtedly result in a great uplifting of the spirit. There is no achievement of greater herosim in all the annals of British history, there is no more inspiring demonstration of the bull-dog courage of our sailors and no better proof of the ability of the Government to harness personal heroism and scientific research in the fight against Fascism.

From the laboratories have come new technical devices for the detection and destruction of submarines which have been fitted to both merchantmen and convoys. The strengthening of the convoys and the putting into service of special types of anti-submarine ships (corvettes and frigates), the attacks on the U-boat bases (Lorient, St. Nazaire, Wilhelmshaven), the extension of reconnaissance and the wide use of aviation are the measures which have brought about this change. In his Commons speech Churchill paid a particular tribute to the work of the very long range aircraft (V.L.R.) in the anti U-boat struggle.

The Washington Conference, to the discomfiture of the Isolationists, also reached full agreement regarding the tasks of the Anglo-American forces in the Pacific and the relationship of the struggle in this sphere to the war in Europe. The struggle against Japan is to be intensified, but Churchill has again expressed his previously stated view that while the defeat of Japan would not mean the defeat of Germany, the defeat of Germany would infallibly mean the ruin of Japan.

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The war in the Pacific is persistent and continuous, involving large forces over wide areas. The greater part of the United States navy is concentrated there and Britain has marshalled large land and air forces on the eastern frontier of India. The Chinese armies continue to play a gallant part in the land war against Japan and it is clearly the task of Britain and America to act with the utmost speed and energy in order to bring aid to sorely stricken China.

The air and sea power of the Allies in the Pacific has now grown to such an extent that severe air raids are being carried out against the island outposts that the Japanese have succeeded in establishing, and there are many indications that they have been driven to the defensive while the Allies are beginning to pass over to the offensive.

Moreover, Japan has suffered huge and irreplaceable shipping losses which are seriously affecting the maintenance of the long supply lines.

It must not be overlooked, however, that the Japanese have dug themselves into exceptionally strong positions from which it is difficult to dislodge them, as was proved by the experience of the Burma expedition. The Japanese know quite as well as Churchill that the defeat of Germany means their own ruin and will draw corresponding conclusions. In the words of P. C. Joshi, leader of the Indian Communist Party:—

> The more Hitler is beaten in Europe, the more desperate Tojo must become. Japanese militarists cannot sit on the fence, they must either advance to domination of Asia or burst. The danger to India, therefore, remains.

But imperialist prejudices still prevent the drawing of the Indian people into the common struggle against Japan and there has even been a hardening of the Die-hard policy of the India Office as a result of improvements in the military situation. This disastrous policy is gravely impeding the unfolding of the offensive.

The turn in the war and the growing strength and unity of the world democratic coalition against Fascism must not be allowed to lead to any relaxation of the people's effort or of their political vigilance. The Allies have learned how to produce armaments on a far greater scale than the Axis, but these weapons have not yet been brought into action. The hardest battles have yet to be fought and the months ahead will tax the resources of the United Nations to the uttermost.

Nazi peace manoeuvres find a ready response amongst Fifth Column circles in Allied lands and there are still influential forces in Britain which cling to a strategy of attrition and seek to postpone the opening of decisive operations. Some base their belief in this strategy on the profoundly mistaken view that delay means the saving of British man-power, while others tremble before the prospect of an armed struggle on the Continent in which the people of the oppressed countries would play a leading part.

The attitude of the Government towards the liberation forces on the Continent remains completely unsatisfactory and it cannot escape responsibility for the long-drawn-out delay in the conclusion of French unity. This is the decisive question for the mass struggle of the whole of Europe. If the Government's policy was orientated on the rapid marshalling of the forces of the French people there would not be such a slowness in the achievement of a fighting unity and the creation of a new French army. There would not be such a toleration of the pro-Fascist activities of leading Polish circles, and a refusal to recognise the significance of the Yugoslav Liberation Army coupled with a disgraceful whitewashing of the more than questionable Mihailovitch. These facts demonstrate how pitifully the political and material aid rendered by the Government to the struggle of the European masses lags behind the necessities of the military situation.

The dragging out of the war is the main hope of Japan and Germany, warned Churchill in his Congress speech. Lost opportunities may never recur,

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peoples wracked by hunger and driven to despair may be unable to continue their struggle against the Fascist terror machine, indecision in the waging of the military struggle may give the enemy the chance to strike counter-blows and to sow the seeds of division.

Victory and peace are within our grasp, but only if the full resources of democratic nations are speedily mobilised in a united and massive effort to break the backbone of the Fascist beast.

The Labour Conference

by J. R. CAMPBELL

ALTHOUGH this year's Labour Party Conference mainly occupied itself with problems of post-war reconstruction, the delegates showed by their actions that they all understood that the heaviest battles of the war still lay ahead. This was evident in the overwhelming vote registered for the retention of the electoral truce. Apart from the truce debate, however, the concentration on post-war reconstruction created the unfortunate impression that Labour had nothing to say with regard to the better organisation of the war effort. With production problems still rife in shipbuilding, coal and transport, this was unfortunate.

Curiously enough for a conference so greatly concerned with the post-war position, the section of the Executive Report on "Labour and the Future" slipped through with comparatively little discussion. Yet much more will probably be heard of this section of the report, which lays down the policy that the party will pursue in the remaining years of the war and the post-war period. Looked at carefully, this resolution appears to have two aims. It is obviously framed to appeal to strata of the population outside the ranks of the working-class people and could provide a basis for Labour co-operation with other political parties. Indeed, it might serve as a guide to labour members in determining their attitude to some of the problems which they are likely to face inside the Coalition Government.

The resolution lays it down that:—

> The adjustments of industry to the needs of peace, the adoption of a policy of economic expansion at home, and the organisation of our export trade, will all call for wide measures of central regulation and control.

The resolution has to face the fact that state interference in industry before the war meant encouragement of monopoly and restriction of output and rejects this policy.

> The great sustaining power of the State must not be turned into a prop for irresponsibly conducted private business. Specious cries for self-government in industry mean in practice the right of the private owners of industry to go their own way, often with the help of the State and without any safeguard for the public interest. Down that road lies national decay and decadence, as the years before the war gave alarming evidence.

The report does not indicate how these tendencies can be overcome except by declaring:—

> All industries must be subjected to such public supervision as will provide guarantees against anti-social restrictive practices or artificial price-levels, and ensure the maintenance of proper standards of welfare for all those engaged in these . . . for the basis of such a relationship between the State, finance and industry there must be a determination to maintain full employment as a permanent feature of public policy.

An explanation of the differing methods of a state control policy organising restriction and a state control policy promoting expansion would have been illuminating. It was never given. Let us hope there is really a concrete policy behind the general phrases of this part of the report.

The delegates were in a much more realistic mood on the electoral truce than they appeared last year. Taking their stand on the obvious proposition that it would be suicidal to break the truce, because it involved leaving the Government, the Executive had no difficulty in carrying the Conference with it. It was absolutely clear from the debate that in the minds of a number of delegates the truce is a general scapegoat for all the weakness of the

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Labour Party. If it is losing members, or is only attracting sparse audiences to its meetings, it is assumed that all those things would be cured by participation in half a dozen by-elections. When Mr. Aneurin Bevan drew a picture of Labour regaining the initiative by bringing pressure on the Government from outside he forgot that pressure exerted by a political party is a function of the support that it has amongst the masses of the people. No party could be so weak in the eyes of the country as one that had voluntarily relinquished responsibility for carrying on the war, unless it could do so on an issue that carried the majority of the people with it.

Initiative is not something that need only be exercised in opposition. It can be exercised by a party in a Coalition Government, provided that party can mobilise widespread public support for its policy.

The full exercise of Labour initiative, however, depends on working-class unity. That is why friends and enemies of the Labour Party alike treated the debate on Affiliation as being of such outstanding importance. The result of that debate we know. It reflects, not the actual strength of the sentiment for unity existing in Britain in the middle of 1943, but the past decisions of some of the larger unions, arrived at under quite different circumstances, and in advance of the decisions of the delegates at their 1943 annual conferences. It was a result arrived at after a one-sided debate, in which the relation of unity to the present-day problems of the working class was hardly ever mentioned.

Star turn of the Executive, as usual, was the urbane and adroit Home Secretary, Mr. Herbert Morrison, who was unable to resist his usual itch for trying to prove too much.

He drew a harrowing picture of having at one time been under the necessity of spending half of his time as Leader of the London Labour Party in fighting Communist intrigues in London, when he ought to have been free to organise the entire Labour Party to fight for the total defeat of the Conservatives. Thus a situation typical of those which are likely to arise when two working-class parties are not united, was presented as being typical of what would happen if unity were realised. The bad results of disunity were impudently presented as the results of unity. For of what period was Mr. Morrison talking? Obviously of the period 1924-28, when MacDonaldism was being consolidated inside the labour movement. In order to tighten his grip on the party, Ramsay MacDonald and his followers had persuaded Labour Conferences to turn down Communist affiliation, and to expel from the Labour Party individual Communists who up to that moment could be individual members of the Labour Party or could represent their Union at Labour Party Conferences. So far from being enraged beyond measure at the intrigues of the Communists, most local Labour Parties tried to resist their expulsion. Hence the disaffiliation of local parties, the expulsion of Communists and non-Communists alike. We have no doubt that this process took fifty per cent. of Mr. Morrison's time—to the outside observer it looked more like 100 per cent. But it is not an example of how Labour Party time was wasted because there was unity with the Communist Party, but how it was wasted in a successful endeavour to prevent unity—an endeavour which led logically to the betrayal by MacDonald in 1931. So with all the bans, restrictions, expulsions, operated with the Labour Party to-day. They are only rendered necessary because masses of Labour people desire to achieve working-class unity and must be forcibly prevented by their leaders from moving towards its attainment. With all that Morrison said about the lamentable effects of such situation we can agree. We want to attain working-class unity and end such situations for ever. Mr. Morrison wants to maintain disunity and perpetuate such situations.

Mr. Morrison's other argument was to present what he called a dilemma—if the

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Communist Party was not in 100 per cent. agreement with the Labour Party, then it could not be admitted: if it were in such agreement, it should dissolve.

Now this latter argument clearly implies a revision of the Labour Party Constitution, which allows for the admission of Socialist bodies who accept the aims, objects and constitution of the party: but Mr. Morrison, brushing the Constitution aside, declared that all such bodies were potential dangers, tolerated only if they, like the Fabian Society, took no sides in the current controversies inside the Labour Party.

The other horn of the dilemma is equally unreal. Every intelligent worker knows that there are scores of questions (like the need for Labour playing a greater role within the coalition, the character of the peace, the various measures of post-war reconstruction) on which there is common agreement between the Labour Party and the Communist Party. Every day in the workshop Labour men and Communists find a basis for common agreement on many questions. Yet when there is this wide agreement on immediate questions Mr. Morrison dares to argue that unless there is a hundred per cent. agreement on all questions—practical and philosophical, tactical and strategical—there can be no working-class unity. This is nonsense and Morrison knows it. He would never dare appeal as leader of the London Labour Party for support of those who agree with his aims one hundred per cent.—rejecting and destroying all others. At any given moment the working-class movement contains people of different political levels, with different ideas of strategy and tactics. This fact cannot be argued away, and the whole problem of working-class unity consists of securing united action in advance of 100 per cent. ideological unity on all questions.

As to Mr. Morrison's specific for securing unity—namely, dissolution of the Communist Party—it can scarcely be taken seriously. If we were to lower the debate to the level of Mr. Morrison we could meet the argument "The Communist International is dissolved—therefore there is no justification for the existence of the Communist Party" with the "Labour and Socialist International is dead. Why doesn't the Labour Party die too?" This is the small change of Conference debating.

The Communist Party in the course of its existence has made a definite contribution to British working-class advance. Without it we would not have had the powerful compaigns against Mosley Fascism, the mobilisation of aid for Spain, the campaign for the Popular Front, the building of the International Brigade, and in the first stages of the war the campaign for friendship with the Soviet Union. (It should not be forgotten that in 1940 a resolution pledging the Labour Party to defend the Soviet Union from capitalist intervention was defeated by the moving of the previous question).

In domestic politics the Communist Party played a leading part in organising the unemployed, in promoting Trade Union unity, and in building up the Shop Stewards movement. It was also the main Socialist propagandist force in Britain.

Now these things were being done by no other parties. Had the Communists not been there they would not have been done at all. Yet at this moment, when the Unions have to be strengthened as never before, when the new generation has to be trained in a socialist understanding of war and post-war problems, when the spirit of working-class internationalism has to be strengthened in view of the many post-war problems—the Communist Party is invited to disappear without the slightest guarantee that any other organisation is willing or able to carry on the work that the Communist Party does so well. Instead of facing the problem of how to reconcile different trends in the working-class movement, within a broad framework of working-class unity, Mr. Morrison petulantly calls upon all other trends but his own to disappear.

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At the bottom of this is a lack of understanding of the dangers confronting the working class. Unless a miracle has happened there are still important elements among the British monopoly capitalists, who, fearing the social consequences of the defeat of Fascism, will be prepared to make a compromise peace at the earliest favourable opportunity—and it would be a bold person who would argue that military reverses may not yet occur which will give them this opportunity. Mr. Morrison himself in recent speeches has accused influential employers of aiming at economic Fascism after the war. Clearly there are big political implications in this employing class attitude.

If the working-class has to play a significant part on these questions and to decisively influence other groups in the population, it must be united. It can only be united on the basis of agreement on immediate aims—complete ideological unity is the product and not the cause of unity in action.

The debate on the post-war treatment of Germany was conducted between Pacifists and Vansittartites and the latter, by carefully concealing their full policy, won. Their resolution, carefully framed, stressed the obvious fact of the mass support for Hitler, the need for the disarmament of Germany, and hoped that after a period of re-education (by whom it was not stated) the German people would play their part in the creation of a peaceful, democratic and secure world.

This resolution left out of consideration the role played by the breaking up of the organisations of the working-class and the murder of their militants in the building up of the mass support that undoubtedly exists behind Hitler

The Pacifists, on the other hand, failed to say what should be done with the Nazi-educated generation of young Germans. They were right in insisting that the roots of the "German problem" lie in the peculiar development of German Imperialism—in the alliance between the Prussian military caste, German big business, and the State (and now the Fascist party) bureaucracy. They did not, however, face up to the implications of a situation in which the Fascist Party was liquidated, a democratic facade created, but the basic elements of German Imperialism remained. To give Germany equal rights to rearm in such a situation would be a monstrous piece of political imbecility and the Conference was right to turn this proposition down.

On the other hand, the dangers of Allied control being used to stifle a popular revolution in Germany was insufficiently appreciated by those who were out to ensure that German militarism would not break out again.

It is impossible, in our opinion, to discuss concretely what the treatment of Germany should be, until we see the strength of the various political trends arising after the defeat of Nazism. And it is impossible to believe that the preservation of peace is solely dependent on something or other that is done to Germany after the armistice or in the peace terms. It is much more dependent on the strengthening of the alliance of the united nations. In facing the problems of the peace Vansittartism and Pacifism are equally unreliable guides.

On the whole the Conference registered a step forward as compared with the previous year. If the delegation of one big Union, voting in advance of its annual conference, had not held up its card for the breaking of the truce, the vote for the disruption of national unity would have been insignificant indeed. The defeat of Mr. Morrison as treasurer was in part a rejection of one whom Conference feared might play the role of MacDonald and of one of the chief architects of the policy of bans, prescriptions and restrictions. The Labour Party clearly wants no Party boss. The vote of 712,000 for affiliation compares with 592,000 in 1936. But there is one very significant difference. The 1936 vote was taken in October after the main

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Unions had declared their attitude. This year it was declared before some of the largest Unions had declared their attitude. Without prejudging the results, it is certain that the vote for affiliation will be very much heavier than it was in 1936. Solid progress to unity is being made; but the pace is dangerously slow. A mighty effort on the part of the advanced workers is needed to accelerate it.

Hot Springs

by GILES NORFOLK

I. The Allied Conference

THE United Nations Food Conference, held at Hot Springs, Virginia, from May 18 to June 3, was a significant event in the war against Fascism. For the first time delegates from the United Nations (representing in all forty-three countries) met to work out joint measures for the solution of the urgent problem of food supplies.

President Roosevelt, in his valedictory address to the delegates (June 7, 1943) declared:—

> The Conference is truly epoch-making because, in reaching unanimity upon complex and difficult problems, you have demonstrated that the United Nations really are united—not only for the prosecution of the war, but for the solution of the many and difficult problems of peace. This Conference has been a living demonstration of the method by which the conversations of nations of like mind contemplated by Article 7 of the Mutual Aid Agreement can and will give practical application to the principles of the Atlantic Charter.

And he added:—

> It is true that no nation has ever had enough food to feed the people as we now know all human beings should be fed. But neither have nations representing over 80 per cent. of the world's 2,000,000,000 inhabitants ever before been joined together to achieve such an aim.

When the plans for the Conference were first announced it appeared that the agenda was mainly concerned with very long-term issues, *i.e.*, with replanning of food supplies for a world already restored (presumably some years after the war) to something like pre-war normal conditions. In the actual discussions and resolutions of the Conference, however, considerable emphasis was given both to the immediate needs of the Allies to-day (the urgent needs of the U.S.S.R. being especially stressed by the Soviet delegation); and also to the needs of the populations now under Nazi occupation, which will have to be met immediately any part of their countries is liberated and the immense tasks of relief and reconstruction in the immediate post-war period, which will undoubtedly require years of work and co-operation.

The Conference also set up an Interim Commission to carry on its general work (until such time as a Permanent Food Organisation can be set up). This Commission, meeting in Washington, is to promote and co-ordinate research and information and submit schemes to the various Governments for improving nutrition, and will thus do the same type of work in the field of food and agriculture that the I.L.O. performs in the field of labour conditions.

Reports of the Conference indicate a determination to achieve a common purpose. It was agreed "that the goal of freedom from want of food, suitable and adequate for the health and strength of all peoples, can be achieved." In this there is a broad recognition that man can, if he will, with the armoury that science has placed at his disposal, harness nature to produce plenty. Only man-made restrictions can hinder and frustrate his purpose.

The Conference was divided into four sections, dealing with (1) Nutrition standards; (2) Agricultural production; (3) Improvement of distribution; (4) Permanent international machinery to carry out the recommendations of the Conference.

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The section of the Conference dealing with nutrition and consumption levels unambiguously recognised that the salient food fact of the pre-war world was that the majority of the peoples were underfed. Striking advances in nutritional knowledge were paralleled by widespread underconsumption, gross malnutrition and preventable disease. (Thus three-quarters of the 1,150 million population of Asia are living below decent health standards.) "Surpluses" accumulated in various parts of the world when the actual needs of the peoples could only have been met by a vast increase in production. Expansion of production, in fact, represents the kernel of the problem before the Conference. And the need for this is not simply a post-war matter. It is of the utmost importance *now* for the United Nations in the struggle for complete victory over Fascism, and to meet the needs of the areas that are liberated.

The war has dislocated world food production in many ways. Vast areas have been devastated by actual military operations. The Axis has temporarily occupied Continental Europe and large areas of the Soviet Union, enslaved the populations and looted their territories ruthlessly. In the Far East Japan has seized extensive and highly productive areas. In all the main countries mobilisation on a huge scale for the armed forces and industry have denuded the land of man-power. On the Soviet-German front this process has been intensified by the appalling rate of slaughter. The insatiable demand for munitions has curtailed the production of agricultural machinery, and vast quantities of fuel have been diverted from agricultural to military uses. Fertiliers are in short supply. Blockade operations have sealed off whole continents. Ruthless warfare on the oceans, coupled with the volume of shipping required for the transport of armies and munitions, have cut the shipping available for the transport of food.

Some brief examples may serve to bring home the havoc that these factors have wrought. There is famine in parts of China, starvation in Greece, occupied U.S.S.R., Poland and India. In occupied Europe there has been wholesale slaughter of livestock. The herds that remain are enfeebled by shortage of feed. Sir E. J. Russell has estimated that even by the middle of last year occupied Europe had lost 25 per cent. of its dairy cattle and higher proportions in other categories of livestock. The U.S.S.R. has lost an important fraction of its grain and sugar acreages, together with severe depletions of its herds. Japan has seized rich sources of sugar and oil-seed. While there is a grain surplus in North America, there are no grounds for complacency about the cereal position, in view of the urgent needs of the U.S.S.R., India and of territories which may be liberated from the Axis. With other major commodities, the position is not so good as with cereals. An expansion of sugar production in Cuba and Central America would appear essential in view of the loss of Java and the Philippines and the beet acreage of the U.S.S.R. The demands of the armed forces, coupled with the need for building up stocks, have placed a big strain upon meat production in its chief export centre, South America. These factors, aggravated by a period of drought, have, it is understood, caused some apprehension about the level of production. The meat position may be eased by the large hog production programme which has been launched in the U.S.A. This will also, by providing animal fat, partially compensate for the losses of valuable oil-seed areas in the Far East. Nevertheless there can be no doubt that there is a general shortage of food available for the United Nations, considered in relation to their needs. It follows from this that every effort needs to be made to increase the production of foods for direct human consumption.

The section of the Conference dealing with agricultural production dealt boldly with these issues, and the delegates have made recommendations to their Govern-

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ments which are of the utmost importance. It remains for the people to press forward the action of their Governments in measures which they may take to implement these recommendations. The delegates have recommended, for example:—

That, as a first step in overcoming the general shortage of food, every effort should be made by countries whose agriculture can be expanded in the short-term period, so long as this is required and so far as the conditions of individual countries require or permit, to increase the acreages under crops for direct human consumption and even to hold back the rebuilding of depleted livestock herds—essential though this rebuilding will ultimately be—as well as the production of other crops which compete for acreages with essential foods.

Another of the recommendations of the Conference is:—

That, taking into consideration that the degree of shortage of foodstuffs which will develop after the war will depend upon the course of the war and on the harvests, it will be necessary during the period from the present until the termination of the war for each of the nations which has escaped enemy invasion to continue to stress the necessity of production of those products which are required by other nations during the war, and at the same time to produce sufficient quantities of products for home consumption, subject to the requirements of the war effort.

A further resolution emphasised the importance of measures to prevent speculation in foodstuffs in the period of shortage after the war.

If the United Nations are able to co-operate successfully in solving the immediate food problems, then there is little doubt that, with victory achieved, they will have taken a first step towards improved nutrition the world over. In the immediate post-war period, the main problem will remain that of producing enough to meet the most elementary needs. As the ravages of war are healed, the Conference believed it possible to consider and organise world resources to ensure diets which are qualitatively better than those of the past, making full use of modern scientific methods and co-operative organisations of production. It is obvious that for the accomplishment of this task many basic problems of social organisation are involved. Meanwhile, as one of the recommendations of the Conference states:—

The first task is to complete the winning of the war and to deliver millions of people from tyranny and hunger. During the period of critical shortage in the aftermath of war, freedom from hunger can be achieved only by urgent and concerted efforts to economise consumption, to increase supplies and distribute them to best advantage.

There are, of course, big vested interests in the way of achieving these hopes. The people have bitter memories both of the speculation following the last war, and of the decay of the nineteen-thirties, when monopoly-capitalist interests in farming, in their efforts to keep up prices and profits, evolved the system of national and international restriction of food production, bonuses to farmers who reduced their output, and legal bans on export above a fixed level. This crazy form of "international planning" (which reached its height in the international tea, tin and rubber restriction schemes before the war) were carried a stage further by the World Wheat Agreement of 1942 between Britain, Argentina, Australia, Canada and U.S.A. which, although setting aside part of the huge wheat surplus for a "relief pool," was mainly designed to fix national production quotas, maintain prices and limit output. There are powerful forces among the big monopolists who have clearly indicated their intention that "Cease Fire" shall be a signal to return to "Business as Usual" on these lines.

A complete break must obviously be made with the spirit of such policies, otherwise they will sabotage both post-war relief and long-term planning. Little information is available to show how far the long-term plans put forward at Hot Springs mean a real change, though fears have been expressed that the British plan put forward at the Conference for an internationally-held "buffer stock" might in practice prove to be only a new form of the old price-maintenance and restriction schemes.

What is certain is that the forces behind the old speculative or restrictive policies

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must not be underestimated. They include the so-called "farm bloc" in the U.S.A. representing the Banking, mortgage and food processing combines which batten on the Middle West; and the City of London investors in Australia and Argentine meat, in Canadian and Australian wheat. In the World Wheat Agreement their voice still speaks of maintaining a supply ample for the needs of consumers "without being so excessive as to create a world burden of unwanted surpluses"—and this in a world where even in peacetime, according to Sir John Boyd Orr, Britain's best-known nutritionist, total food supplies would have to be revised by 150 to 200 per cent. to maintain the world population in health.

The importance of Hot Springs is that it has boldly and clearly set forth the people's needs. The united Conference declaration can be utilised by the peoples of the world to advance in the fight for policies of common concern and against the vested interests.

II. Immediate Problems

The Soviet delegates at Hot Springs, while welcoming international action and co-ordinated measures for world food production and distribution after the war, stressed, as of primary importance, the urgent present needs of the Soviet people. Krutikov, Chairman of the Soviet delegation, declared:—

> Among the nations united and associated in the war against Nazi Germany the Soviet Union occupies a special place, having borne the main burden of this war for nearly two years. Food supply problems are therefore of great importance to the U.S.S.R. at the present moment, firstly, because we require food now to supply the large army we maintain to defeat Germany and win the war; and secondly because food is needed to maintain the life and health of the plundered and impoverished people of the regions which the Red Army is liberating from the German invaders.
>
> The resources of the Soviet Union itself are inadequate, because a considerable part of Soviet territory (the Ukraine and some other areas) which are substantially significant from an agricultural point of view, have been invaded by the enemy and are as yet not liberated from enemy occupation. The Soviet Union will need food imports and food relief even after the war, during the entire period required for the restoration of Soviet agriculture.

In view of this grim statement, and of the picture it calls up of the needs and sufferings of the Soviet people, it is painful to remember the complacent and boastful speeches about the food situation in this country that were made at the recent debate in Parliament (May 13, 1943): "Our stocks were raised very high above peacetime levels," declared Mr. Mabane, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food. "The country can be confident that the national larder will continue to be well stocked during the next twelve months." He grew lyrical in praise of "the pride and joy of the Ministry of Food, our main unrationed foodstuff, the National Loaf . . . the only unrationed loaf in Europe. . . . We claim that our loaf is the best bread in Europe." The general attitude of the House, during this debate, was one of selfish and uncritical satisfaction. "We're well fed, so why worry." That such an attitude was possible, with the world food situation what it is, argues a serious lack of appreciation in this country of the needs of our allies, the Soviet Union and China, and a complete failure to recognise the necessity for a combined food strategy as an integral part of joint military strategy.

The discussion at the Labour Party Conference on Post-war Relief in Europe would have been more realistic if it had been linked with the present need of foodstuffs for the U.S.S.R. as a means of ensuring that there will be any "post-war world."

Even a brief consideration will bring out the salient factors which have made the food situation so acute for our Soviet comrades. First, as Krutikov pointed out, vast tracts of rich agricultural land are still under Nazi occupation, while the regained areas are devastated and ruined, as in the Kuban. Further, throughout the U.S.S.R. there is a serious shortage of man-power for agriculture, because of the

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needs of the Red Army and of industry and because of the terrible losses among the civilian population in areas the enemy has occupied. Add to this a shortage of tractors and other agricultural machinery, which makes it difficult to obtain maximum results from areas untouched by the invader—for instance, deep sowing, which is a safeguard against drought, becomes more difficult.

It was estimated that in 1942 the Soviet losses—as percentages of the productive capacity of 1939—were as follows:—

Sowing area	...	36½ per cent.
Cereal crops	...	36 ,, ,,
Wheat ...	...	33½ ,, ,,
Beet sugar	...	90 ,, ,,

Since then other important producing areas, such as the Kuban, have been overrun and laid waste. Further, in both the Ukraine and the Kuban, important bases for livestock, there must have been severe losses in meat and dairy products.

These losses are all the more serious when one considers that Red Army soldiers, in the gruelling fighting and exacting conditions of the Eastern Front, probably need a minimum of 4,000 calories per day per man—1,000 a day higher than required for normal peace-time activity. The same principle applies to the intensified labour of the workers in industry. If it is true that Red Army rations have recently been cut, this emphasises the seriousness of the present situation.

It is hardly with feelings of pride that we turn to look at the situation here. Our cities are bomb-scarred, but our fields have been spared the ravages of the invader; spared, indeed, because of the very sufferings which the Soviet people have so heroically endured. Here, bread and cakes are unrationed. The flour from which they are made is only of 85 per cent. extraction; dilution with other cereals still appears to be very small, probably only of the order of 5 per cent. This means that valuable home-grown grain, completely wholesome for human needs, is still going to animals. Likewise potatoes, which could be used to replace part of our wheaten flour, are, it is understood, being dried for animal food. Farmers and farm workers have quite rightly been praised for the efforts they have put forth to increase the acreage of arable land. But again a large proportion of the new arable land is used for the production of crops for animal feed. It has been stated that our beef herd shows no diminution from its pre-war level, yet we do not hesitate to import large quantities of Lease-Lend canned meats. Nor do we hesitate to import material which is used to provide us with an assorted array of custard powders, pudding mixtures and the like. The Ministry of Food appears to contemplate with horror the suggestion that coupons should be surrendered for a lunch at the Savoy or supper at the Dorchester. At this decisive moment in the course of the war, the conclusion seems inescapable that food shipments occupy too large a proportion of our imports, and that a key influence in Ministry of Food policy is that of keeping all sections of the food trade in being and ensuring their post-war position.

The remedy for this gross disparity between the burdens carried by two allies would seem to be the establishment of a genuine combined Food Board. At present there is a combined Food Board which consists of the United States Secretary of Agriculture and the Head of the British Food Mission in Washington. The two nations whose food position is most difficult, China and the U.S.S.R., should be admitted to this board in full and equal partnership. As things are at present, there is, in effect, competition between us and the U.S.S.R. for Lease-Lend supplies instead of co-operation on the basis of relative needs. No unbiased observer would deny that the needs of the U.S.S.R. are the greater. We should recognise this, and drastically cut our demands. These have undoubtedly been heavy, as Stettinius (Lease-Lend Administrator) recently stated that of the total Lease-Lend shipments to Britain 60 per cent. was

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food. As the U.S.A.'s own needs of foodstuffs, both internally and for her armed forces, tends to increase, so available supplies of Lease-Lend foodstuffs other than grain may tend to contract. This makes it all the more imperative that any cuts should be at our expense and not at the expense of the U.S.S.R. The other major factor in an equitable allocation of available foodstuffs is the provision of the necessary shipping. At the moment there seems to be no real pooling of Allied shipping, and this places the U.S.S.R. in a particularly disadvantageous position relative to this country because of her shortage of tonnage.

Two questions remain. What food is there available? What practical measures are there for increasing food shipments to the U.S.S.R.? Her foremost need is for grain, and here there is no supply difficulty. Warehouses, stores, even churches are literally bursting with stored grain in Canada. So far as ships are concerned, raising the rate of extraction here to about 95 per cent. would, according to Graham-Little, M.P., immediately release about 400,000 tons of shipping used at present to bring wheat to this country. Owing to the losses of considerable beet-growing areas, the U.S.S.R. must also urgently need supplies of sugar. For this commodity the United Nations supply position is not so easy as with grain, owing to the loss of the Philippines and Java. However, there are undoubted possibilities for increasing production in Cuba, Central America and the West Indies. Thus, while Cuban production in the immediate pre-war years was about 3,000,000 tons, the level before the world crisis of the early thirties reached 5,000,000 tons.

Fats are of importance because of their high calorific value. As with sugar, the United Nations' *vegetable* fat position is difficult, but African production could be increased if the native populations were given the necessary financial and political inducements. If there are any supplies forthcoming from French West Africa, then they should be shipped to the U.S.S.R. rather than here. Part of the U.S.S.R.'s needs could be met with animal fat. We might reduce our demands for U.S.A. lard in favour of the U.S.S.R. Likewise some of the oleo shipments from South America might be diverted to her.

Because of the shipping position the general aim should be to ship to the U.S.S.R. those foodstuffs giving the maximum food value per unit of shipping space. Wheat and fats are both good cargoes in this respect, and sugar is a dense cargo. Dehydrated foods, such as dried meat and eggs, are particularly valuable from this point of view, and in addition are "transport-savers" for land transport, an important point in the U.S.S.R. itself. Apart from their other nutritional virtues, both dried meat and egg have a high fat content. For the U.S.A. exports of dried eggs first priority should be given to the U.S.S.R. Similarly, a first priority for available supplies of dried meat should be given to the U.S.S.R. It has been indicated that the recent issue of corned beef as part of the meat ration here is not due to any shortage of butcher's meat. It can only mean, therefore, that a large store of canned meats exists in this country and that these are being turned over while stocks of fresh meat accumulate in cold store. In view of this position it is indefensible to go on importing U.S.A. canned meats while Soviet citizens suffer acute privation. This is all the more so when we can still boast of a beef herd equal to, if not greater than, the pre-war size.

Thus food *can* be made available. And so can the ships to carry it. There is a danger that when people may demand that more food be sent to the U.S.S.R. sinister influences may persuade the Government to interpret this as "more food but less arms." She needs both if the United Nations are to hasten the day of victory and reduce the sufferings of long-tormented Europe. The correct formulation should be: *Divert* some of the food and the ships carrying it to this country to the U.S.S.R.

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Production Problems Today

by J. R. SCOTT

HAVE all the problems connected with production been solved? In March, 1942, agreement was reached between the Unions and the Ministry of Supply, and subsequently between the Unions and the Engineering Employers' National Federation for the establishment of Joint Production Advisory and Consultative Committees. A number of people assume that such Committees have solved the problem of production.

While it is perfectly true that the establishment of such Committees has resulted in a marked improvement in production throughout the country, it cannot be said that the problem is completely solved.

Let us examine for a moment or so the whole of the background. The development of the war in which the Allied Nations are taking the initiative, successes that have been obtained in North Africa, and the development of invasion forces for Italy and the Continent—all this has brought out the magnitude of this question of production.

Every industry throughout the country is being carefully combed to release for the forces the maximum number of people. Experiences obtained in the North African campaign have shown the inadequacy of certain mechanical equipment, and the scarcity of skilled men in the forces. To overcome these two difficulties there has been the wholesale scrapping of certain mechanical devices, sharp changes in production, and also an increase in recruitment of skilled men to the forces.

It is obvious that the gaps can only be filled by the intensive recruiting of women to industry. Large numbers of women who have great domestic responsibilities have to be directed to work in the factories. All of them cannot be employed full time; so arrangements have to be made for organised part-time working.

This in itself creates problems inside the factories, in that there is not yet established continuity of work and machine operations. Added to this is the changing demands of war needs; new mechanised devices and new mechanised weapons have repeatedly to be produced in place of those which have been found to be unsuitable. Jobs of a very high degree of accuracy have to be modified to fit in with the scheme of mass production, performed by unskilled and untrained labour.

There are also the responsibilities of the civilian population in the field of Home Guard activities, firewatching and such other civil defence duties.

This ofttimes causes a sharp question to be raised as to which is the most important, production or civil defence duties. Such a question cannot possibly be answered in a general way. All are important, all have to be done. It is a question of harnessing each and every one of these duties to the chariot of total war, to see in the total war effort the purpose of destroying Fascism, and that each and every duty undertaken by the whole of the population in the country must serve this common end.

Restrictive legislation is inevitable in such circumstances. No man or woman can exercise unlimited freedom: freedom of movement, freedom of action, must be curtailed to meet this single purpose. This calls for powers to direct workpeople to undertake civil defence duties, to work in factories, to be transferred from one district to another, all of which are realised as important and necessary if the objective is clearly seen.

Many workpeople are chafing as a result of the operation of the Essential Work Order, a very necessary piece of legislation in war circumstances. This piece of legislation endeavours categorically to define which is essential work, and places obligations upon workpeople and employers to give effect to the directions issued by the State. The Essential Work

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Order, having had a fairly long run of operation, needs to be examined in the light of whether it succeeds in serving its purpose of mobilising the man and woman power of the country. In a general way it can be said that it has been very useful, but the legal interpretations of this order need to be incorporated into an amended order in the very early future. Workpeople chafe at being subject to fines, subject to direction; when numerous experiences could be given of employers having received similar directions, succeeding in evading their full operation. In recent cases employers have evaded directions to reinstate by paying the workpeople wages irrespective of whether they work or not. Again, for flagrant disobedience employers have merely suffered nominal fines.

Then there is the question of the Appeals Board. This, now merely Advisory, should become a directing and authoritative body whose decisions must be carried out—failing which, appropriate penalties should be imposed. Employers and their representatives who fail to give effect to a decision should be ruthlessly dealt with. They should be personally and collectively punished and removed, if need be, from managerial posts. If people throughout the country were given reason to believe that decisions would be enforced without fear or favour, there would be a tremendous response. Absenteeism, about which so much is said, would disappear in great proportion.

It is impossible to make any very considerable addition to the working personnel of the country. It is impossible, indeed fantastic, for the policy of long working hours to be continued. No man or woman can work for a long spell for sixty or more hours a week. Such long hours are needed from time to time as an extra spurt or to open out a bottleneck. But by now we should have reached the stage of productive effort when a large part of production throughout the country can be regularised.

Whither can we turn, therefore, and what new ideas need to be brought forward, so as to overcome this problem? Joint Production Consultative and Advisory Committees need to be strengthened, and their powers extended in the factories so as to break down the last vestige of vested interests and "prestige of managerial functions." To argue, as some employers do, that this, that or the other question is a matter of "managerial functions," when half the world is struggling against the vile beast of Fascism, would be humorous if the circumstances and situation were not tragic. Employers who place obstacles in the path by using pre-war arguments about "managerial functions" must be swept away.

If the factory Joint Production Committees were authoritative bodies on methods of production, they would gain the complete confidence of the workpeople in the establishment, who should regularly be consulted and made aware of the major developments inside the factory. Of course there would need to be an understanding amongst the workpeople that some of the questions discussed on a J.P.C. were not matters which could be generally talked about (because the information, if generally known, could be made use of by the enemy). But the mass of the workpeople would accept this position if they were being made aware, consulted and advised on the major problems. What right has any individual employer or management to assume that he can be trusted with a secret which responsibly elected workpeople's representatives cannot also be trusted with? Workpeople accept nomination and are elected to a position; and then on these Joint Production Committees sit the tried and trusted representatives of the workpeople who know what Fascism is, and the dire effects if the Nazis were successful.

Factory Joint Production Committees need to be linked up much more closely with the Trade Union District Joint Production Committees. These in turn need a closer association with the Regional Boards. The Regional Boards' activities should be brought much closer together

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by a central authority in close collaboration with national representatives of Unions comprising the Trade Union District Joint Production Committees. This does not mean merely expressions of opinion or proffering of ideas—but real close collaboration, handling and grappling with the problems, whether they be of factory, district or national importance. Such organisations as these, right from the bottom to the top, could determine the questions that arise from time to time relating to Civil Defence duties and production in the workshops.

Welfare needs much more attention than it is receiving at the moment. True, many factories have introduced canteens in recent months; but a number of reports are to hand complaining of the inadequacy even of established canteens. There still exists a large degree of food wastage; a number of people who leave food on their plates because it is unsuitable. This does not necessarily mean that the food is bad; the complaints are about the way food is prepared and cooked. Where are all these chefs and famous cooks, country house cooks, large town house cooking staffs? Should not their services be brought to bear on this important question, to teach, and direct the masses of people who are preparing food for canteen use; to guide how to vary, prepare and make the food much more palatable and acceptable.

How extensive has been the campaign for the utilisation of labour-saving devices, to do away with the using up of energy in humping stuff from place to place? All the energy of workpeople should be used and not wasted. Trucks, conveyors, cranes, roundabouts, trolleys, all such things need to be in greater use; tools, equipment, need to be constantly adjusted, altered and rearranged to meet the immediate demands.

These are some of the things that need greater effort and greater attention than they have had hitherto. In this way the full man and woman power of the country can be brought into use, and an even greater number of men can be released from the factories for the forces.

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CORRECTION.—In the JUNE LABOUR MONTHLY on page 163, in the list of Union conferences supporting Communist Party affiliation or opposing the Black Circular, it is regretted that by a slip the Association of Engineering & Shipbuilding Draughtsmen was included among those supporting affiliation, when the vote was against the Black Circular.

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Women in Industry

Some problems examined

by PEGGY SHACKLETON

IN July, 1943, after nearly four years of war and two years after the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union, it is appropriate to review the present state of the mobilisation of woman-power, to indicate the stages by which recruitment has proceeded, and to consider the principal tasks ahead. Such a review must necessarily be sketchy, but it may serve to draw attention to some of the more salient points.

There is every reason for pride at the part which the women of this country have played in the war effort, whether in the Services, civil defence or industry. Out of seventeen and a quarter million women who are available for work, *i.e.*, between the ages of fourteen and sixty-five, over seven million are engaged in industry and the Forces. In shipbuilding, aircraft production, tank and gun factories, as well as on jobs normally regarded as female work, viz., shell-filling, they are proving their capacity, as they did in the last war.

Mobilisation has been gradual. Voluntary recruitment was the only method of enrolling women until April, 1941, but under the National Service Act (No. 2) 1941, the Minister of Labour took powers to conscript single women between nineteen and thirty; up till March, 1943, only women in the twenty-twenty-five age-groups had actually been called up. The Control of Engagement Order of February, 1942, which provided that women between eighteen and thirty could only be engaged through an Employment Exchange, was extended to cover women up to forty in February of this year. The Control of Employment (Directed Persons) Order of May, 1943, enables the Minister to direct married women without young children into part-time work, which has hitherto been on a voluntary basis, and also to direct people into work previously unscheduled under the Essential Work Orders.

The Government thus has very wide powers of direction and control over woman-power and has exercised them on a large scale. The tasks that lie ahead call for as much effort and vigilance as the earlier stages of mobilisation. Not much can be looked for in the way of expanding the labour force, or fresh recruitment. There is, however, the possibility of a considerable extension of part-time work, in which about 600,000 women are at present engaged. This number would undoubtedly be increased if measures, such as those described below, for relieving married women of the strain of domestic duties, were introduced. Schemes for taking work to "immobile" women in rural areas are also being developed. Such schemes are somewhat limited in scope and it is essential to ensure that they do not conflict with recruitment for whole or part-time work in industry proper and that trade union rates are paid. The chief objective of the moment—and this has been emphasised by both the Ministers of Production and Labour—must be to secure an increase in the productivity of the existing labour force and so enable more men to be released for the Services.

Two main factors are at present impeding the fullest development and maximum utilisation of women in industry: wages and welfare. These problems must be tackled vigorously if the new objective is to be realised, especially when the opening of the Second Front brings an increased strain on man-power resources. The women shop stewards of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, at their first Conference last month, passed a resolution pledging themselves to work for maximum production, for the removal of barriers to recruitment and efficiency, and for the final defeat of Fascism. Though the twenty-six delegates were drawn from widely different areas and

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engaged on a great variety of jobs, they found many common difficulties and obstacles.

Their most insistent demand was for an immediate increase in the low level of women's wages in engineering, described by Joe Scott, of the A.E.U. Executive, as a "scandal." The national minimum rate for work "commonly performed by women" is 50s. for a 47-hour week, for women over twenty-one. This rate, which represents an increase of 7s. over the previous rate, was negotiated between the Engineering Employers Federation on the one hand, and the National Union of General and Municipal Workers and the Transport and General Workers' Union on the other, in December, 1942. The Agreement also proposed the grading of women engaged on men's work in four main categories, but this cannot come into force until the A.E.U. and other unions party to the Relaxation Agreement of May, 1940, give their agreement. This Agreement provides that where a woman is doing a man's job "without supervision or assistance" she shall, after thirty-two weeks, receive the full man's rate and bonus. But from all accounts, employers are using every possible kind of dodge and loophole to prevent the full rate from coming into operation. Women are kept under supervision long after they have become capable of doing a job single-handed; they have been set to work on many new methods and processes introduced since the war, for which no man's rate has been laid down, and men's jobs are constantly being broken up into component parts, so that the full rate is not applicable. Many employers have been very reluctant to up-grade women and to train them to improve their skill, as a result of the wages question. Though about four-fifths of the training in industry has to be provided "on the job" by employers, very few have introduced suitable or adequate schemes, and training is a matter which needs to be given far more attention than at present.

The principle of the "rate for the job" has been widely accepted in theory—the Trades Union Congress in its evidence before the Select Committee on Equal Compensation listed thirty trades where it applied—but it remains largely an academic proposition. Both the T.U.C. Women's Conference in April and the A.E.U. Women's Conference in May called for the adoption of "equal pay for equal work" over the whole field of industry. The Select Committee won an important victory by securing equal scales of compensation for men's and women's war injuries, and it is clear that the original opposition to this equality was based on the fear that it would become the thin end of the wedge and would lend added force to the demand for the "rate for the job." This is a matter which concerns men as much as women. Jack Tanner, at the A.E.U. Women's Conference, stressed the fact that women trade unionists must fight to preserve the wages and standards of the men whose jobs they had taken over.

Equally vital, both for the recruitment of women and their efficient utilisation in industry, is the improvement of working conditions. This means more than just the provision of cloakrooms and lavatories, important as these are. It involves measures which will enable married women to come forward in greater numbers, by easing their domestic burdens. Perhaps the most important of these is the provision of nurseries. By the end of March, 1943, there were 1,200 wartime nurseries in England and Wales, with another 307 in preparation and a further 139 under consideration. This is a remarkable improvement—up to June, 1941, only thirty-seven nurseries were in existence. War nurseries are established by the Ministry of Health, which has first to be satisfied that there is sufficient local demand to justify the expenditure. There has often been undue delay and quite inexcusable reluctance to start them at all by officials, who argue that the mothers do not use them, or that no suitable sites are

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available. As well as day nurseries, there should be more night nurseries, where mothers on night shifts can leave their children; there also needs to be more nursery classes for the two- to five-year-olds, and more places where school-children can play after school hours.

The Select Committee on National Expenditure, in its seventh report, March, 1942, drew attention to a number of other factors which were making it difficult for married women to work in factories. They recommended employers to let women take time off for shopping, and, where possible, to make priority arrangements in the shops for war workers. In this connection the introduction of points rationing has been a great advantage, and it should be extended to cover *all* goods in short supply, so that working women, who have no time to stand in queues, should not be less well off than more leisured women. Transport is another difficulty; in many cases facilities have been utterly inadequate, and the high cost of transport was mentioned by the Select Committee on National Expenditure as "a serious obstacle to recruitment." Strong criticism was expressed by the A.E.U. women of the billeting arrangements for transferred workers, and evidence was given of inadequate accommodation, insufficient food and extortionate rents, far beyond the means of the lower-paid munition workers. Absenteeism, which is especially high among married women, is largely the outcome of removable circumstances. If there were more nurseries, shopping facilities, better transport and billets, voluntary absenteeism would no longer be the problem it now is, and labour wastage would be reduced.

The improvement of health and welfare provision within the factories would also contribute greatly towards a reduction in absenteeism. It is encouraging to note the importance which the Minister of Labour attaches to these matters. The number of canteens in factories employing more than 250 workers, subject to his Canteen Order, has increased from 2,814 in December, 1941, to 4,026 in December, 1942; but there needs to be more canteens in smaller firms and more direct participation by the workers in canteen management in all factories. Mr. Bevin has set up an Industrial Health Advisory Committee; and a useful conference was held in London on April 9-11, at which shop stewards, as well as works doctors, personnel officers and Government officials, spoke. The Chief Inspector of Factories has emphasised the value of joint works health and safety committees and, though many production committees have such sub-committees, their establishment should be made compulsory in all firms engaged on vital war work.

Consideration of health and safety problems naturally leads to the vexed question of hours of work. It has long been established that excessive hours reduce rather than increase efficiency, and there is no doubt that many women and young people are now working far too long—often sixty or seventy hours a week—as well as having to travel long distances and undertake civil defence and fire-watching duties. Even if they do not feel the strain immediately, it is bound to tell in the long run. The A.E.U. women passed a resolution calling for a maximum of fifty-four hours a week for women and young persons, except for short periods, these to be arranged in consultation with the unions.

They also urged that arrangements should be made to transfer pregnant women to light work. The problem here is, of course, an economic one; the National Health Insurance provisions for pregnant women are grossly inadequate and their improvement is one of the most urgently needed reforms advocated in the Beveridge plan.

The advances which have been made in many directions—especially in the extension of nurseries and canteens—have all been won as a result of constant and unremitting pressure through joint production committees, shop stewards, and

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women's organisations. That this is so, emphasises the need for strengthening Trade Union organisation among women and securing their increased representation on production committees. The A.E.U. third Production Enquiry showed that out of forty-eight full lists of J.P.Cs., only nineteen had women on the committee, and in the whole nineteen, there were only 37 women to 214 men. This disproportion, in the Union's opinion, is the reason for the relatively little attention paid to women's welfare questions at J.P.C. meetings—accounting for only 6 per cent. of the welfare subjects discussed.

The aim should be not only the 100 per cent. organisation of women, but to make them trade-union-conscious and educate them in the principles and practice of the movement. This is the only way in which lasting improvements in women's working conditions and wages will be brought about and their determination not to be used as "cheap labour" become a reality. Many prejudices have been broken down since the war. Women have shown themselves capable of doing the same work, and accepting the same responsibilities, as men—just as they have long been doing in the Soviet Union. But there are still conservatism and sex barriers to be eliminated. It is vital to make both men and women realise that there can be no conflict between them, either now, in the common struggle against Fascism, or in the future.

Document of the Month

Dissolution of Communist International

Mr. Harold King, chief Moscow correspondent of Reuter's Agency, addressed a letter to J. V. Stalin, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R., in which he requested an answer to a question of interest to the British public. Marshal Stalin replied with the following letter:—

Dear Mr. King,—I have received your request to answer a question referring to the dissolution of the Communist International. I am sending you my answer.

Question: British comment on the decision to wind up the Comintern has been very favourable. What is the Soviet view or this matter and of its bearing on future international relations?

Answer: The dissolution of the Communist International is proper and timely because it facilitates the organisation of the common onslaught of all freedom-loving nations against the common enemy—Hitlerism. The dissolution of the Communist International is proper because:—

(*a*) It exposes the lie of the Hitlerites to the effect that "Moscow" allegedly intends to intervene in the life of other nations and to "Bolshevise" them. An end is now put to this lie.

(*b*) It exposes the calumny of the adversaries of Communism within the labour movement to the effect that Communist Parties in various countries are allegedly acting not in the interests of their people but on orders from outside. An end is now being put to this calumny too.

(*c*) It facilitates the work of patriots of all countries for uniting the progressive forces of their respective countries, regardless of party or religious faith, into a single camp of national liberation—for unfolding the struggle against Fascism.

(*d*) It facilitates the work of patriots of all countries for uniting all freedom-loving peoples into a single international camp for the fight against the menace of world domination by Hitlerism, thus clearing the way to the future organisation of a companionship of nations based upon their equality.

I think that all these circumstances taken together will result in a further strengthening of the United Front of the Allies and other united nations in their fight for victory over Hitlerite tyranny. I feel that the dissolution of the Communist International is perfectly timely—because it is exactly now, when the Fascist beast is exerting its last strength, that it is necessary to organise the common onslaught of freedom-loving countries to finish off this beast and to deliver the people from Fascist oppression.

With respect,

May 28, 1943. (Signed) J. STALIN.

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Book Reviews

Ehrenburg's Brilliant Tale

The Fall of Paris by Ilya Ehrenburg (Hutchinsons, 10s6d).

"THE FALL OF PARIS" is a grim book; a vivida tale of a city led to its death by the cynical policy of a blind ruling class.

For Paris is dead. Paris is a city of shame, dead amidst apparent life. No stark ruined walls ennoble Paris. No mountains of rubble litter her sidewalks, no craters pit her streets. No nerve-racked crowds shiver in shelters and tubes. Paris is intact. Her body unscarred. Her soul dead.

As the story of that slow death unfolds, the vision of another city—Stalingrad—springs to the mind. Europe presents no contrast more poignant as that between Paris and Stalingrad. Paris, the buildings unmarred, the soul dead. Stalingrad, the body shattered, the soul marching on.

What makes the one story so glorious and the other so grim?

What led Paris to her doom?

Ilya Ehrenburg solves the problem in his brilliant tale. Paris was ruled by fools who knew not whither they went, who knew nothing of the laws which govern human societies, nor cared to know. Fools whose sole quest was the benefit of self and class. Fools who lived in squalid luxury when the sun shone and fumbled helplessly when hurricanes came. Fools who gaoled and shot and disarmed the very men who in the fateful hour might have snatched the city from its doom or at least from its shame. What might not Paris have attempted or achieved had her people been permitted to defend her streets as its citizens had defended Madrid against overwhelming odds? With a cold realistic pen Ehrenburg reveals the steps along which blind rulers led blind citizens to a bitter end.

And what, on the other hand, had led Stalingrad to triumph? It was the knowledge, skill, purpose and morality of wise leaders backed by the staunchness of a proletariat educated to know the nature of their struggle and what interests were at stake. Paris died because it deserved to die. Stalingrad lives because it deserves to live.

Ehrenburg writes as an artist, as an historian, as a reporter of consummate skill. He writes also as a trained sociologist whose understanding of the laws of society enables him to perceive, and make his readers perceive, the nemesis which always pursues those who ignore social law and fly in the face of truth and morality. Never was an artist better equipped for his task. "The Fall of Paris" will become a classic mine for the historian of the future: it presents a living tale by a man who experienced the facts and knows how to record them. "The Fall of Paris" is great "reporting" by a man who perceives the significance of what he has seen and by an artist who weaves fact into an enthralling tale.

"The Fall of Paris" is a collection of vignettes. The characters depicted are numerous, too numerous perhaps, but each is representative and could not well be omitted. Tessa the Cabinet Minister, a careerist with no guiding principles save self-interest and hatred of Communists: Tessa, who becomes the tool of Bretueil the Fascist and Weiss the German agent, ends up in the pitiful enclosure of Vichy. Joliot, the newspaper proprietor, living as the paid publicity agent of the rich men who direct his policy and leave him to struggle out of one dilemma after another until he exclaims in desperation: "They're up to some game. Maybe, they're not even that, but only pretending to be. I used to admire their cleverness, but now I don't know . . . I don't understand myself what I write." Jules Desser, the financier, one of the real rulers of France, is less contemptible but not less pitiable than Tessa; he loved the simple and admirable things of France and had at least the courage and decency, when he saw the miserable wreckage of those beautiful things, brought on so largely by his own blind stupidity, to shoot himself.

Some Fascists, like Breteuil, knew clearly whither they were going, but discovered when it was too late that the German Nazi was less admirable in power than it had appeared to be in prospect. "God knows, it was not what I wanted."

Several, like Ducane, Andre, Fressinat, Fabre, may have been blind and purposeless, but they were true Frenchmen and fought and died like patriots.

The Communists alone kept heart and courage, though crushed by their own ruling class and hunted by Germans. The Communists alone perceived the issues and knew whither France was going.

Noble and knowledgeable amidst a general bewilderment and baseness stand men and women like Michaud the mechanic and Denise his [illegible] vert. Michaud, who carried on his purpose whilst fighting for the people's Spain and as conscript with the armies of France. Denise, the daughter of Tessa, renouncing her social position, who lives in poverty and with magnificent faith and courage works on for the Party when left practically alone in Paris, ignorant of the fate of her comrades, but still working, hiding refugees, organising illicit literature and slowly building up Party activity.

The Spanish struggle naturally looms large and reveals the early stages of the French collapse.

It has been said that a background of political knowledge is needed to understand Ehrenburg's book. And that is decidedly true if the full flavour of the book is to be tasted. But the book itself, on the other hand, provides a knowledge of the political background against which the movements of any country at this critical time should and could be read. The elements which led to the fall of Paris appear in every land in incipient form, they are not wanting here; they have not been wanting in North Africa during the past six months, nor in the Polish disturbance of the last few days. "The

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Fall of Paris" reveals the nature of the mines strewn along our path, enabling us to detect and uproot them.

The vivid picture is grim and full of pathos, the death of Jeannette, of Pierre, of Ducane, the shadows which closed around Agnes and many more make sad and tragic reading. But sadness is not the final note, nor is "The Fall of Paris" the last word. The ultimate resurrection of Paris appears as inevitable as its fall if we take account of the forces stirring even in its blackest hour. I remember how similar darkness has been dispelled elsewhere. There is Denise, there is Michand, there is Clemence . . . and around them will crystallise—we feel it in our bones as we read the tale—the new order in Paris as it has crystallised in the Russia towards which our eyes are turned with hope.

HEWLETT JOHNSON.

Shorter Notices

"*Under Stalin's Command.*" A Review of Soviet Strategy and Tactics by Lt.-Col. Hans Kahle (The Russia Today Society, 1*s*).

THIS MOST valuable booklet on military questions gives an appreciation of the strategy of the Red Army under the command of Marshal Stalin from May, 1942, to February, 1943. It is necessary to read it twice: first rapidly with growing tension, and then to digest the material.

The chapters which claim particular attention are those on Stalingrad. It must be remembered that "after the German armies had failed to break through at Voronezh and on the Mid-Don into the rear of Moscow, Stalingrad had become the last chance of the German Command to materialise their plan. Hence Hitler's definite order to his generals to take the city at all costs. Gradually the whole effort of the Eastern campaign was directed to the single task of storming and conquering Stalingrad." The Germans had reached the Volga both north and south of Stalingrad and they had battered through the city till they thought that by a last mighty effort they would take it. The account quoted from *Pravda* of this most critical period gives some idea of the armed might—the main forces of the Wehrmacht—that was thrown in on one decisive day: 2,500 flights over the army's lines; the destruction of command points; the feeling of sea-sickness of the men in the communication trenches caused through the shaking of the earth; the Volga aflame—"instead of water a fiery stream: gasoline and oil poured from the dumps flooding the trenches and the army command points. The army headquarters were drenched in blood." But they did not pass. For another month after this tremendous October 14 the battle raged, another month in which "Hitler was still shouting in Munich that Stalingrad would be taken and Lord Kemsley's *Daily Sketch* in London decided that 'its capitulation now seems certain'."

Kahle pays tribute not only to the great leadership of the Red Army and the personal initiative, resource and matchless courage of the Red Army-men, but also to the people of Stalingrad; who sent their message to Leningrad: "We are the people of Stalingrad and it would be unbecoming for us to hide before the enemy." For the battle of Stalingrad stands out not only as the battle in which the German armies were decisively defeated and captured, which smashed the plans of the German High Command, but the battle in which the people and their army, an indissoluble whole, fought and won in conditions of warfare on a scale and of a horror never before experienced by mankind, and thereby raised the stature of mankind.

For its clarity, understanding and masterly analysis of this nine-month campaign on the Eastern Front this booklet, as General Sir Hubert Gough says in his Preface, "ought to be in the hands of every officer, and it should also be read by every citizen."

O.P.

Studies in Economics and Industrial Relations, Univ. of Pennsylvania Bicentennial Conference, Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1941, 12*s* net.

THIS IS a reprint of a number of short papers contributed by thirteen American economists to the Bicentennial Conference of the Univ. of Pennsylvania. Writers include the former President, Herbert Hoover (whose contribution is short and platitudinous), Professor Wesley Mitchell, noted for researches into the trade cycle, and Professors J. M. Clark and Alvin Hansen. Among the more interesting contributions are those by Professor J. M. Clark on "Investment and Employment," a statistical survey by Dr. Simon Kuznets on "Capital Formation, 1879-1938," and a too-brief note on prices and wages during the industrial revolution by Earl Hamilton, the historian of price movements in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In conclusion, the book descends to two rather feeble contributions, entitled: "Is Unemployment Inevitable?" M. D.

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Readers will remember that a few months ago we asked for loose copies of back numbers of LABOUR MONTHLY in order to have complete sets bound. We now have a good stock of Bound Volumes ranging over the years from 1923 to 1941. 1923 is in two volumes at 10s. 6d. each, all other years in one volume at 10s. 6d. each, post free. No volumes are available for 1940. Please send cash with your orders, which will be dealt with in strict priority of receipt.

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A SPECIAL APPEAL

The Fund is down to £84 this month. In the circumstances of which you have read on the inside front cover this is startlingly serious. For many months we have asked for £100, and finally, last month, we got it. Now, the extremely heavy cut in circulation imposed by the reduction of the Quota brings very severe new financial problems. A larger sum is needed to close the gap between our maximum receipts and our minimum expenditure if LABOUR MONTHLY is to continue as at present.

Old readers of the MONTHLY will recollect that the Fund for which we appealed regularly was originally called a Debt Fund or a Guarantee Fund. Then, in the changed situation of a war, came the remarkable increase in our circulation which wiped off the debt and made us reasonably self-supporting and we opened the Development Fund to be used, as its title indicated, for the development of LABOUR MONTHLY activities such as the Discussion Group Movement, the printing of LABOUR MONTHLY pamphlets, the organisation of LABOUR MONTHLY Conferences, etc.

The situation has again changed, and while the *demand* for our paper is larger than ever before, priceless paper must be saved and the supply cut down. So for the present "Development Fund" is a misnomer and we go back to our "Guarantee Fund." *Not* a Debt Fund. We have no debts. We plan never to have any, but guarantees to pay our bills we must and will have.

We have said it countless times before: We want a regular income. *The only difference this month is that the income must be further raised.* Last month, in response to a very special and personal appeal a large number of readers signified (in writing) their willingness to become Guarantors. But we now want that number far more than doubled.

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